

3

DAY 1

NJ ASK - SECURE MATERIAL - DO NOT COPY

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

Begin your writing here.

Click.

With bleary eyes and a brain fried from reading facts, you finally reach out with reluctant fingers and turn off your lamp. To say you are tired is an understatement. It's practically a miracle that you didn't fall asleep an hour ago, but one thing kept you going, the test. You have not received any grades all year, but now you are about to take your end of year exam, the larger-than-life test that will determine whether you will move onto the next grade, or lag behind and be forced to repeat the eighth grade. The thing about this test is its duration: it's all the way through year up till September, back when no grades looked like a good idea. Now the test approaches and you've been studying all through the night. Now you've finally realized that enough is enough and it's time for bed. You gratefully close your eyes, barely able to suppress the bubble of anxiety engulfing your chest.

Our school has reviewed a proposal to have no grades, but to simply base one's learning ability on a collection end of year test that will determine whether each individual student can pass onto the next grade level. The funny thing is the school board is actually considering this. If our school converts to a no grade system, it will be the sixth worst choice our school has ever made. Students will lose sleep

Continue your writing on the next page if you need to.

NJ ASK - SECURE MATERIAL - DO NOT COPY

DAY 1



LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY (continued)

Continue your writing here.

worrying over that test, and since this system is rarely used, students will not be prepared for the grading styles they will meet in future education. I firmly believe that grades, while often taken for granted, are something central to our school and education.

Statistics taken by the Monmouth Children Psychology Group (MCPG) show that 71% of kids spend over two hours studying before tests and that 68% of stresses that kids have are directly related to important tests and quizzes. Exams put immense pressure on kids. They stress. They worry. They lose sleep over the idea of receiving a poor result. Just imagine how amplified that sense of panic will become if an entire years worth of lessons comes down to a single test. The kids who choose to study for this test will be lost, unsure what most to worry about as the content would span 10 months of notes.

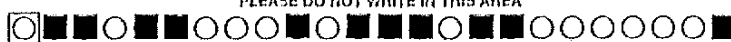
"I put hours of my time into studying for quizzes," says Clarissa Vercorade, "There's not enough time in the world for me to study for a test of that extent..." Her concerns are shared by other students as well.

"I can barely remember what I had for breakfast,"

Continue your writing on the next page if you need to.

Page 9

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA



8501814

3

DAY 1

NJ ASK - SECURE MATERIAL - DO NOT COPY

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY
(continued)

Continue your writing here.

Says Patrick Donahue, "How can I be expected to remember names and dates I learned 10 months ago?"

On top of the interminable studying, students who will unavoidably be up late studying will have a harder time with the test. According to a study done by Harvard, kids require at least 8 hours of sleep to properly use their capabilities. Students who are up till midnight studying, then have to catch a 6:30 bus are not getting enough sleep to function properly and test well.

My cousin Jessica went to a middle school that had a no-grades system. She's in high school now and got a huge surprise when she got a D on her first high school assignment.

"I was so used to not getting grades that I didn't know what was expected of me," she told me. "The no-grades system did nothing to help me prepare for high school." On top of its poor short-term effects of over stressing students and causing them to lose sleep, the no-grades system has the horrible long-term effect of making transition into higher education difficult for students who are not used to doing

Continue your writing on the next page if you need to.

NJ ASK - SECURE MATERIAL - DO NOT COPY

DAY 1

3

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY
(continued)

Continue your writing here.

Assignments that effect their overall score.

If our school does decide to take up the no-grades system, it will effect our students in an entirely negative way. Kids will be overstressed, under slept, and unprepared for the rigorous grading system of high school. I think that if we follow this proposal, it will be for the worse.

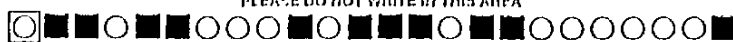
Click.

You comfortably settle in to bed, ready for a good night's sleep. You have a test tomorrow, but you are confident that you will receive a good grade, since you have studied efficiently and sufficiently. Besides, it is not in many grades you will be receiving this semester. With grades arrived in small portions rather than in one large chunk, there is less pressure for each one, and it is easier to keep your overall grade up. You serenely close your eyes, ready for the grades the next day, will bring.

STOP. Do not write beyond this page.

Page 11

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA



8501814

4

DAY 2

NJ ASK - SECURE MATERIAL - DO NOT COPY

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

Begin your writing here.

Splash, splash, splash.

In a sputter, I trundle into the lazy current of the water. Rough shells pinch the bottoms of my feet, and water, cool as a breeze, lightly tickles my ankles before carrying on its way.

I'm five years old, and my only care in the world is the icky snails that trail the river floor. This is the river that makes its home down the street from mine. By now, the river water has splashed onto my clothes, despite how shallow the water is. But what's the fun in staying clean. Already the sun is making its way towards the mild crests of waves just over by the bridge; I should probably be heading home soon. But just then, a little boy of six peeks his sandy head over a dune.

"Allie, we found a crab! Hurry up before it gets away," he bellowed. All concerns of heading home off over the crests of the waves as I scuttle over to where a little crab waits to be greeted.

Continue your writing on the next page if you need to.

NJ ASK - SECURE MATERIAL - DO NOT COPY

DAY 2

**LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY**
(continued)

Continue your writing here.

Splash, splash, splash.

I roll up my jeans as high as they can go. It's high tide now, and the water brushes past my knees, still not quite in a hurry. A flock of seagulls' echoing calls roll through the air.

I'm ten years old, and today was the last day of school. To me, it's not summer until I've felt the slowly warming water of the Navesink River ripple through my toes. So, once I got home, I knew that was exactly what I needed to do. I rushed home and slung off my backpack.

"Hi mom!"

"Hi honey. How was school?"

"Fine."

"Where are you going?"

"The river."

"Be careful!"

"Bye Mom!"

That was how it went. I now here I stand, water tickling my knees in the first breezy

Continue your writing on the next page if you need to.

4

DAY 2

NJ ASK - SECURE MATERIAL - DO NOT COPY

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY
(continued)

Continue your writing here.

of true summer.

Splash, splash, splash.

"Come on guys!" I call over my shoulder at my friends. They're such slowpokes sometimes. "We're in luck! It's low tide!" I kick off my shoes and shamelessly plunge across the stream of water. After warming up to the idea, Rose and Carmen hurry after me, laughing at the water twisting around the ankles like a loyal pet.

I'm fourteen years old now, and despite the fact that I've been to the River countless times, I've never gotten sick of it. I can't imagine life without it. I'm at a time in life full of changes. I'm starting high school next year. New school, new classmates, new activities. To be honest, I don't know much about the future, or what I'm going to do. The choices in front of me are as clear as ink, but I know one thing for sure. When all is said and done,

Continue your writing on the next page if you need to.

NJ ASK - SECURE MATERIAL - DO NOT COPY

DAY 2

4

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY
(continued)

Continue your writing here.

here is where I will be. Home, at the Havesink
river with sand on my face and my toes in
the water. Home is where I'll be living when I
grow up. I couldn't imagine it any other way.

And who knows? Maybe my daughter will
come here some day to explore the sandy banks,
maybe she'll even find a small creek or two.

STOP. Do not write beyond this page.

Page 17

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA



8501814